AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news concerns and collected information of matters affecting labor concerning to the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

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WHOLE NO. 1546 — WILLIAM GREEN, President — WASHINGTON, D. C., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1940 — GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer — VOL. 20, NO. 48

Citrine Warns Nazism Seeks Destruction of Democracy; Dictators Kill Trade Unions, British Labor Chief Says; Secretary Stimson Backs Organized Labor's Policy

Hitler's Bombs Have Slaughtered and Injured Thousands Without Lowering English Morale; American Planes Needed.

New Orleans, La.—Scathing denunciation of Nazism as a menace to democracy throughout the world, the determination of the British people to victoriously resist the Nazi attempt to destroy them, and the appreciation of Britain for the important assistance given by America in the struggle against totalitarianism, featured the address of Sir Walter Citrine, general secretary of the British Trades Union Congress, to the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor.

The highlights of Sir Walter's address follow:

"Only a month ago in our Congress we have we passed with the complete support of the delegates a resolution pledging our determination to carry on the struggle until victory is won.

"We understand what it means if dictatorship prevails. We know that the basic principle upon which the dictatorship rests is that there can be no other form of organization within the community that will challenge the will of the dictatorship.

"In Germany every vestige of organized religion, organized politics, organized trade unionism was crushed with a ruthlessness that belongs to the Middle Ages. When the dictators marched into Holland and Norway and Denmark and found labor organization, they immediately disbanded the organizations and confiscated the funds.

Organized Labor Abolished Under Dictatorships

"Can anybody doubt that if Hitlerism and Fascism become triumphant that our movement can survive? When I say our movement I mean our labor movement. Our movement is not some soulless organization, it is a movement of a band of people trying to express themselves in some organized form to raise the standards of life of the community as a whole. Thousands of our people have sacrificed in order to make this movement function. I ask what will be the fate of that movement if the dictators triumph.

Trade Unionism Built on Democracy

"Trade unionism is both a cause and a product of democracy. It can only function in an atmosphere of free expression. It can not function in cellars or behind closed doors. It must impress the public mind and it must have certain facilities to do that. Trade unionism basically is the assertion of the rights of the common man, of the principle that it is not ordained by God that any community should be ruled by aristocracies, whether those aristocracies are of birth or wealth. In pursuit of that principle of voluntary organization you will find they have developed until they are in every corner of the land meeting to promote some laudable purpose.

Heavy War Taxes in Britain

"In our country we have used the instrument of taxation to effect a very extensive redistribution of the wealth of the country. We have succeeded in putting the burdens on the backs of those who are broadest to bear it. Out of every five dollars of income of the richest people of our country $4.37 is taken in taxation.

"Another restriction we put upon the employer was this. We said that if this was a war to defend democracy, it was not going to be a war to create a plutocracy. Employers are not going to make extensive profits out of this war. And so we induced the government to impose a 100 per cent excess profits tax so that no employer now can make greater profit out of the war than he did in the years preceding it.

All Are Subject to Rationing

"We then insisted upon a system of rationing, and I do not think that anywhere else in the world with us and not with the government. We are the people who ask for this system and we must take full responsibility for their consequences. Nowadays everybody is rationed in our country, no matter who they are, and although there are substitute commodities which people may have, every class of the community is on the same level so far as basic commodities are concerned.

Labor Asks Big Shadow Factories

"I want to make it plain to you that the trade union congress is represented on every form of administration which deals with these problems. Our democratic machinery, in other words, from a trade union point of view, is fully in operation.

"Our principal claim, that we should be consulted in every form of activity, has been accepted by the government and we have so far served in this war. We are helping by this means to shape policies. We are trying to take some of the square pegs out of the round holes, because I find that once these men of great reputation, these marvelous business organizers, get into a different environment in government service, they sometimes act with a stupidity that is breathtaking.

Britain Stands Between Nazism and Civilization

"The future rests upon the outcome of the war. Britain is supposed to be a barrier, and I believe she is that barrier between our civilization and our democracy and the invading forces of the Nazi hordes. We have a tremendous task in front of us. Indeed, someone here, some very prominent statesman has willingly said that the British Navy was the first line of defense of American democracy.

British Morale Is Bomb Proof

"Hitler is seeking to crush the morale of our people, to destroy their homes, to put their factories in ruins. Day after day and night after night we are exposed to bombs from the air, some that speak in the sky so many it can scarcely be seen, only identified by a wisp of smoke behind it. What come out of the blue, drop its bombs, and before any planes can get near it disappear. You or I or any other person may be near that bomb when it falls. It may fall upon a humble cottage or upon a government building. At night, night after night our people from their beds in dawn are experiencing a menace which we have not as yet found the answer to.

"Thousands of our people are sleeping under the staircases of their houses, their only protection in case the house collapses over them. Others are sleeping under the planes in their dining rooms, the more fortunate ones in a small shelter about six feet long maximum and four feet wide, a man and women lying head to foot with perhaps a narrow bed on each side of the shelter. I myself am sleeping in my own made shelter that I made before the war, with four other adults, and our shelter is only 2x6-5, by six feet high.

Multitudes Killed and Injured by Air Raids

"This is the life of the British people day in and day out, every night, and yet you see no indications of the nations of the nations will, one may say, no indication even now, despite the loss of life, of the people's readiness to sacrifice that which they have obtained. Five thousand of our people have already been slaughtered in these bombing raids, and more than that have crippled or injured in a most serious fashion, and there is still worse to come.

Abundance of Planes Needed

"We want planes, planes and more planes. Our need is urgent but extensive. It may be true that the first line of defense of American democracy is the British Navy. I want you to make the first line of defense of all democracy the American Air Force. Planes may be flashed out to the world's sky. Depending upon the resources, the capacity, the expedition with which you produce munitions, depending upon that will be depending the fate of the whole of Europe, including the British Isles.

Appreciates American Assistance

"I want to repeat how grateful we are for the generous help we have received from you. I want you to realize that speed is the essence, now as never before, that the hardening is getting on.

"When I came into this room I looked at the emblem here and I saw these words, 'Labor Omnia Vincit—Labor All Conquers,' and I said to myself, why, American labor can conquer the Nazis without firing a shot if necessary.

"Yes, we have a great opportunity. Not only our people but the people of the world are looking to you with anxiety, almost with desperation. When this great nation of yours was engaged in a struggle to establish its right for a self government your Patriots fought in the hamlets and villages and cities of the stricken British Isles. It goes over the mountains and across the plains of your neighbor Canada. It comes in a threatening volume from the people of the whole British commonwealth of nations. One day that cry will rise with the roar of Niagara, sweeping away in its path all the obstruction and tyranny that characterizes dictatorship, and sweep it forever from the pathway of mankind. Men and women of the American labor movement, the power to hasten that day lies in so small measure with you."

Collective Bargaining Upheld by Stimson

New Orleans, La.—Strong support of the complete recognition of collective bargaining as the most efficient method of safeguarding the rights of working men and women was expressed by Secretary of War Stimson in an address to the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor.

"The practices and procedures of collective bargaining are most surely protected by the machinery of democratic organization of workers and their privilege freely to unite, unthreatened by any outside interference," Secretary Stimson declared. "When I say this I am only voicing the recognized experience of our nation as crystallized in the decisions of our Supreme Court. That august tribunal, in speaking of our union has said:

"'They were organized out of the necessities of the situation. A single employee was helpless in dealing with an employer. . . . Union was essential to give laborers opportunity to deal on equality with their employer.'

"So spoke Chief Justice Taft in one of the leading cases on the subject in this country.

"Now I say that in times of emergency even more than in ordinary times the responsible trade union is an indispensable instrument of national well-being. It improves the public mind and it must improve the public mind and it must impress the public mind to do that. Trade unionism basically is the assertion of the rights of the common man, of the principle that it is not ordained by God that any community should be ruled by aristocracies, whether those aristocracies are of birth or wealth. In pursuit of that principle of voluntary organization you will find they have developed until they are in every corner of the land meeting to promote some laudable purpose.

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"Another restriction we put upon the employer was this. We said that if this was a war to defend democracy, it was not going to be a war to create a plutocracy. Employers are not going to make extensive profits out of this war. And so we induced the government to impose a 100 per cent excess profits tax so that no employer now can make greater profit out of the war than he did in the years preceding it.

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News Briefs

GROCERY CLERKS WIN WAGE-BOOST STRIKE

Washington, D. C.—A week's strike of nearly 1,000 clerks and managers employed by the Sanitary Grocery Company in 215 stores in the Washington area was settled through an agreement between company representatives and officials of Local 639-A, Retail Clerks International Protective Association, A. F. of L. affiliate.

The provisions of the agreement carried a wage raise of $1 a week for many clerks; one additional holiday—Washington's birthday, a five-year experience rating recognition for clerks employed after service with another company a six-month seniority push-up for 314 men, and a maximum working day of 9½ hours for the five days, Monday through Friday, and of 11 hours on Saturday.

All of the 225 stores were closed during the strike. More than 500 members of the Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen's Union refused to walk through the picket lines.

SENATE CONFIRMS MILLIS AS LABOR BOARD MEMBER

Washington, D. C.—The Senate unanimously confirmed the nomination of Dr. Harry A. Millis, Chicago labor mediator and economist, to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board for five years from August 27, 1940, to succeed Joseph Warren Madden, whose term expired on that date.

ANOTHER INSURANCE FIRM SIGNS AFL UNION CONTRACT

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Industrial and Ordinary Insurance Agents Union No. 21184, A. F. of L., affiliate, announced the signing of a contract with the Life Insurance Company of Virginia for its members employed by the company in the District of Columbia.

The company agrees to give the agents a commission of 45 per cent on all first year increase (industrial) and gives a 10 per cent increase in first year ordinary commissions. The contract also includes provisions for a five-day week; vacations with pay; traveling expense of not less than $2 per week, except those duties not necessarily have, to be collected by automobile, then additional allowance is made; reduction in cost of agents' surety bonds; no individual quotas or allotments and other changes made in the conditions of employment.

The negotiators representing the union were Frank Weiler, Ralph U. Boyer and George L. Russ.

LABOR LEGISLATION PARLEY POSTPONED UNTIL DEC. 9

Washington, D. C.—The Labor Department announced that the revised National Conference on Labor Legislation had been postponed until December 9.

Verne A. Zimmer, director of the Division of Labor Standards, in charge of arrangements for the conference, said that governors of approximately 40 States will be represented at the conference, which will review the progress of State labor legislation and discuss the integration of State labor regulations with the national defense program.

305,000 MORE WORKERS GET PRIVATE PLANT JOBS

Washington, D. C.—Federal Security Administrator Paul V. McNutt reported that 305,000 workers were placed in private industry by the United States Employment Service during September, reducing the number seeking jobs through state employment agencies to about 4,900,000.

At the same time the Civil Service Commission revealed that employment in the executive branch of the Federal Government reached a new record peak of 1,088,596 for that month, an increase of 19,702 over August, during which month the 1,000,000 figure was topped for the first time.

FEUDAL LAND TITHES OUTLAWED IN QUEBEC

Montreal, Can.—Under a law enacted by a recent session of the provincial legislature, agricultural tenure, one of the last remnants of the feudal system of land holding brought to Quebec by the early French settlers, has been abolished. Under the system owners of large tracts of land known as seigneurs parceled out acres to tenants and received a yearly tribute. Under the legislation abolishing the feudal tax a provincial commission is distributing approximately $2,000,000 to indemnify the landlords. The tenants, in turn, will become owners of the land they occupy, reimbursing the commission through a small tax.

INJUNCTIONS BANNING PICKETING DISSOLVED

San Francisco, Calif.—The California State Federation of Labor announced that Superior Court Judge J. G. Bruton had dissolved an injunction prohibiting the A. F. of L. Culinary Union from picketing restaurants in Walnut Creek and that Superior Court Judge Warren Tryon had dissolved an injunction secured by a sub-driver against the Alameda County Building and Construction Trades Council.

President Roosevelt Renews Labor Peace Plea In Letter to AFL; Efforts to Promote Unity Cited by Green and Continued by Convention

Actions of Convention Summarized

New Orleans, La.—Following is a summary of some of the actions taken by the American Federation of Labor at its sixtieth convention here:

Social Security—Extension to employes of private hospitals, private schools and colleges, publishing houses owned and operated by religious and charitable organizations, and religious and welfare organizations whose products are sold to the public.

War in Europe—Extension of all help and assistance to Great Britain in her hour of need by our government short of war itself.

Defense—Labor representation on all matters affecting labor's welfare; equal representation of employers and employes on all boards connected with employment control.

Selective Service—Assurance of reemployment at his old position upon return to civilian life of any man called for military service by the government.

Union Management Cooperation—Extension as rapidly as possible; AFL president authorized to appoint a committee to counsel union-management cooperation committees.

Works Projects Administration—Abolition of policy of invading the construction industry and transferring construction of public projects from contracts with private companies to W. P. A. undertakings with wages and labor standards below those fixed by union agreements and prevailing in private industry.

Anti-Trust Laws—Condemned the course of Anti-Trust Division of Justice Department for its unwarranted and destructive activities against organized labor in enforcing anti-trust laws.

Fair Labor Standards Act—Condemned administrator of the act for holding that there should be no lowering of labor standards established by law because of the national defense program.

Social Security—Extension of old-age protection for all wage earners and their families.

Workmen's Compensation—Revision of state legislation to extend compensation period, reduce waiting period, increase benefits and eliminate experience rating.

Health Insurance and Hospitalization—Extension of disability insurance in the social security program.

U. S. Housing Administration—Adequate appropriations to enable the USHA to continue its activities and supply the additional needed low rent housing and slum clearance to house under healthy and sanitary conditions workers in the low income groups.

Navy Yard Wages—Reopening of the wage schedules effective November 18 so that adequate increases may be provided.

National Labor Relations Act—Amendments to include a change in the unit rule, to permit elections by plants and recognized classifications of workers to retain their separate units; to direct court appeal by labor organizations in representation cases; preserving the integrity of collective bargaining agreements; specifically entered into by bona fide labor organizations; elimination of the intervening steps in procedure; five-man labor board in place of present three-man board.

Post Office Employes—Legislation providing annuities for widows of retired employes; legislation to apportionate annuities for widows of employes who die while in the postal service.

Government Employes—Optional retirement after 30 years of service with compulsory retirement at age 60 for all groups regardless of roster status; legislation granting right of government employes to bargain collectively regarding conditions not determined by law.

Government Contracts—Amend Walsh-Healey Act to prohibit the Secretary of Labor from denied their employes the right to organize and bargain collectively.

Fire Defense—Action in support of the efforts of the International Association of Fire Fighters to secure the appointment of a national committee on fire defense.

Prison Made Goods—Extension of legislation restricting sale of goods made in penal institutions.

Oppressive Labor Practices—Enactment of Senate Bill S. 1970, passed by the Senate but not reported by House Committee on Labor.

40 CENT WAGE URGED FOR LAMP INDUSTRY

Washington, D. C.—The Portable Lamp and Shade Industry Committee submitted a report recommending a minimum wage of 40 cents an hour to Col. Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division. If approved by Col. Fleming the 40 cent rate will increase the wages of more than half the 10,000 workers in the industry, which is largely contemplated in New York, Philadelphia and Chicago.

Executive Council Declares "Labor in America Can Be Solidified and United Through Affiliation With the A. F. of L."

New Orleans, La.—Appreciation of the work of the American Federation of Labor in sustained effort for social progress and a strong hope for "a just and honorable peace" in the organized labor movement were expressed by President Roosevelt in a letter to the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor here.

The message, President Green, by direction of the A. F. of L. Executive Council, sent a telegram to President Roosevelt pledging 100 per cent cooperation of the A. F. of L. to protect freedom, liberty and democracy and reiterating the readiness of A. F. of L. representatives to meet at any time with representatives of the C. I. O. to consider methods for the reestablishment of unity in the ranks of labor.

The convention adopted the recommendation of the Executive Council authorizing the committee representing the American Federation of Labor to meet with a committee representing the C. I. O. "for the purpose of negotiating a settlement, anywhere, any time, any place."

The texts of President Roosevelt's letter and President Green's reply follow:

President Roosevelt's Letter

THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington

Dear Mr. Green:

Please extend to the officers, the delegates and the members of the American Federation of Labor my congratulations and felicitations upon this occasion of the sixtieth convention of the organization. At the same time let me wish, with all your supporters, for a meeting out of which will come substantial good and benefit to American wage earners, to American business, to American Farmers and to the general public.

I had hoped to be able to attend the New Orleans convention and to speak to my friends there in person; but that was part of a plan I had which included the possibility of a cruise and also the spending of Thanksgiving at Warm Springs. As you know, all plans have to be tentative in these days of crisis, and subject to change according to circumstances of the hour. It still is inadvisable for me to be further away from Washington than a distance which will permit my return in seven or eight hours. Reluctantly, therefore, and with deep regret, I have had to forego the privilege of attending the New Orleans convention.

This nation of ours and its workers have made great economic and social gains since your 1933 convention was held here in Washington. Representatives of organized labor have played an important part in the shaping and carrying out of the progressive program which has meant so much not only to wage earners but to farmers and business men as well.

Now we have come to a period which demands intense and sustained cooperation so that our beloved Republic can present, in any emergency which may arise, a united front. I shall count on the full support of every true and united democracy. In order to do this successfully all of us are called upon to work together in a common purpose and for the common good that these United States shall forever be and that the institutions we as a free people enjoy, shall ever be preserved. To this end labor can make its contribution along with the rest of the American people. I am confident that this contribution will be generously and gladly given without reservation.

Labor will lend its aid in planning for full efficiency of industrial production, speeding the flow of production and placement of new workers, in planning for full labor supply, in maintaining the high standards of labor and social legislation, in maintaining sound and uninterrupted work in the defense industries and in promoting smooth employer-worker relationships at a time like this when the steady flow of production may be our greatest need. Sacrifice may be necessary in the future for every one. Responsible action along with the rest of the American people, I am confident that this contribution will be generously and gladly given without reservation.

Among the things which labor will contribute is, I venture to suggest, an unwillingness, as a fair sighted and a patriotic effort to bring about a just and an honorable peace within the now divided labor movement. Labor leaders, with their hearts in their heart, and the advantage of a point of view forever in mind can, I am sure, find the way to reach such a peace.

Peace may not be easy to achieve and the intricate problems involved may not be easy to solve. But when men of honor and good intentions sit down together they can work out a solution which will restore the much needed harmony either by unity or by a sensible working arrangement.

We as a people have the same determination to put our country above all else. Please God we shall always keep it so as to preserve our priceless heritage of the world's greatest democracy which came from the hearts of the people of the Republic. It can only be kept by building upon that sound foundation in the patriotic way, in the democratic way and in the American way. And that is and shall be our way, as a great and as a united people, now and forevermore.

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed) FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

Honorable William Green,
President, American Federation of Labor,
Roosevelt Hotel,
New Orleans, La.

President Green's Telegram

To the President of the United States,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Please accept the profound thanks of all those in attendance at our convention for your most inspiring message. Be assured of the full support of the American Federation of Labor in the execution of your wise plans and policies.

You can rely upon us to give freely of our skill, training service and labor to America in order to safeguard and protect our cherished heritage of freedom, liberty and democracy and in the realization of the common objectives set forth in the fifth paragraph of your appealing communication wherein you call upon us to lend our aid in planning for full efficiency of industrial production, in planning for selection, training and placement of new workers, with the view to the full labor supply, in maintaining the social gains of recent labor and social legislation, in maintaining sound and uninterrupted work in the defense industries and in promoting sound employer-worker relationships at a time like this when the steady flow of production may be our greatest need. Sacrifice may be necessary in the future for everyone. Responsible action and self-discipline, physical and moral fitness are now required of all of us as our part in the defense of our country and democracy.

We deeply appreciate the suggestion you make that "an unselfish, a far-sighted and a patriotic effort be made to bring about a just and honorable peace with the now divided labor movement." Fortunately we can officially make answer to your suggestion in a most definite and sincere way. The Executive Council included in its report to the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor the following recommendation:

"The Executive Council fully understands the spirit of unity and solidarity within the ranks of labor. It entertains a full and deep appreciation as well as a complete understanding of the value of united action and of the mobilization of the full strength, power and influence of the workers of the nation into one united American labor movement. The Executive Council is firmly of the opinion that labor in America can be solidified and united through affiliation with the American Federation of Labor.

"In order to accomplish this purpose and realize this objective, the Executive Council reports to the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor that it has endeavored to re-establish unity within the labor movement through conferences with representatives of the C. I. O. and has succeeded in effecting a settlement of existing differences during the past year. The committee representing the American Federation of Labor stands ready and willing to meet with a committee representing the C. I. O. for the purpose of negotiating a settlement, anywhere, any time, any place."

Your suggestion, therefore, that when men of honor and good intentions sit down together they can work out a solution which will restore the much needed harmony either by unity or by a sensible working arrangement is coincidental with this recommendation of the Executive Council to the convention now in session.

I am confident the convention will concur in the recommendations of the Executive Council by officially authorizing the committee representing the American Federation of Labor to meet with a committee representing the C. I. O. around the conference table for the purpose of negotiating an honorable peace for the re-establishment of unity and solidarity within the ranks of labor.

I repeat, Mr. President, that these assurances will be carried out in good faith and with all sincerity whenever opportunity for the American Federation of Labor to do so presents itself.

WILLIAM GREEN, President,
American Federation of Labor.